Times-Picayune
3/1/67

DA'S ACTS HURT CASE--HELSETH

'Jeopardize Any Convictions'--ACLU Official

In his current conspiracy investigation disclosures District Attorney Jim Garrison "has committed serious breaches of professional ethics that have jeopardized any convictions that may be obtained," the American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana charged Monday.

Alan E. Helseth, ACLU executive director, said a "Roman circus" has developed around the DA's "' investigation' into an alleged plot to assassinate President Kennedy" and the U.S. Supreme Court "has put prosecutors on notice that convictions obtained principally through an excess of prejudicial, pre-trial publicity, or even in an atmosphere of such publicity, will not be allowed to stand.

"The reversal of one of Billy Sol Estes' convictions, and even more pointedly the recent reversal of Dr. Sam Shepard's conviction, are clear indicators of how the Supreme Court feels about such shenanigans as Garrison is currently engaged in," said Helseth.

The ACLU praised the Chicago authorities handling the murder charge against Richard Speck for restraint in disseminating information on the case.

"Assuming that he has a genuine case against conspirators," Helseth said of Garrison, "his present activities could quite possibly serve to protect those guilty."

"Under these circumstances," he added, "it appears that Mr. Garrison should be making every effort to make his case as valid as possible, so that the accused conspirators might be brought to justice, rather than giving his role as publicist first priority."